

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**FOR RECLAMATION'S CONSENT TO WATER SALE AND TRANSFERS
UNDER THE
SACRAMENTO RIVER SETTLEMENT CONTRACTORS
2003 IRRIGATION SEASON WATER TRANSFER PROGRAM**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

**MID-PACIFIC REGION
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA**

FEBRUARY 2003

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BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

MID-PACIFIC REGION

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

FOR RECLAMATION'S CONSENT TO A WATER SALE AND TRANSFER
UNDER THE GLENN-COLUSA IRRIGATION DISTRICT
SACRAMENTO RIVER SETTLEMENT CONTRACT FOR THE
2003 IRRIGATION SEASON WATER TRANSFER PROGRAM

Recommended:

Robert B. Echart
Environmental Specialist

Date: 2/14/03

Recommended:

Frank Michy
Regional Environmental Officer

Date: 2/14/03

Approved:

[Signature]
Regional Resources Manager

Date: 2/14/03

FONSI No.

03-02-MP

**Finding Of No Significant Impact
For Reclamation's Consent to a Water Sale and Transfer
Under the Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District
Sacramento River Settlement Contract For the
2003 Irrigation Season Water Transfer Program**

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and with the Council on Environmental Quality's Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), the Mid-Pacific Region of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has found that the proposed action (described below) has no significant impact on the human environment and therefore an EIS is not required.

This action, taken in accordance with Article 3 of the Sacramento River Settlement Contracts, will allow for one-year water transfers from Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District (GCID), a Sacramento River settlement contractor, of up to 60,000 acre-feet of water identified as base supply under the settlement contract, and the execution of a Warren Act contract with Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) that would allow for a portion the transferred water to be diverted to storage in Shasta Reservoir. This water transfer and contract action will occur during 2003.

BACKGROUND

Reclamation has received requests from eight Federal Sacramento River settlement contractors (Contractors) requesting Reclamation's consent to the sale and transfer of water to lands located outside the boundaries of the Contractors' respective service areas. This FONSI pertains to only one of these contractors, the GCID. Potential purchasers of this water include: the MWD, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for its Dry Year Program, the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's Environmental Water Account (EWA), other Central Valley Project (CVP) or State Water Project (SWP) contractors. The water that will be transferred is part of the GCID's base supply identified in their respective Sacramento River settlement contract with Reclamation. Reclamation's consent to such transfers is required by Article 3 of the Sacramento River Settlement Contracts.

The purpose of the proposed water sale and transfer is to offset a possible shortfall of water in 2003 that would have otherwise been available to MWD absent to the Secretary of the Interior's decision to reduce MWD's supply of California's diversions from the Colorado River beginning on January 1, 2003.

In the event that MWD does not exercise its option to obtain water under the agreement with the contractors, the water may be made available for sale to the DWR Dry Year Program which provides water to make up losses of normal supplies due to hydrologic shortages or to the EWA which provides water allowing for strategic cuts in pumping at the export pumps in the Delta, and other CVP or SWP contractors.

PROPOSED ACTION

Reclamation's action would approve a one-year transfer of up to 60,000 acre-feet of transferred water from GCID. Associated with this transfer is the potential use of a Warren Act contract between United States and MWD that will allow storage of up to 10,000 acre-feet of the transferred water in Shasta Reservoir during 2003.

FINDINGS

Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in no significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. This finding is supported by the following factors:

1. Reclamation's consent to the GCID's proposed water sales and transfers will not significantly affect hydrology and water quality. Increased flows to the Delta would result in insignificant changes to Delta water quality. All water quality related operational restrictions will be maintained. Therefore, Reclamation's approval action and contracting action will not result in indirect or cumulative effects on hydrology or water quality.
2. Reclamation's consent to the GCID's proposed water sales and transfers will not significantly affect listed or proposed threatened and endangered species. Water conveyance systems within the contractor's service area will remain watered and available to the giant garter snake and other wildlife that utilize it. Water levels in irrigation and drainage canals will be maintained within several inches of non-project operations and no complete drying out of such conveyances would occur. As such, water conveyance systems would remain watered and available to the snake and other wildlife that utilize it. Lands taken out of production will be largely dispersed, allowing for a mosaic of lands that could be utilized by the snake throughout the Purveyor's jurisdiction. In general, the maximum block size of contiguous lands being idled would not exceed 160 acres, except under certain limited circumstances, and even in those cases, the maximum contiguous area being idled would not exceed 320 acres. The one-year duration of the water sales and transfers minimizes long-term disruption to the giant garter snake habitat.

There will be no significant effects to fisheries. All environmental regulations that specify minimum flow requirements and operational constraints for listed fish and other considerations will be met. Required releases from Shasta Reservoir for the protection of fisheries will continue to be made.

Reclamation has consulted pursuant to the Endangered Species Act with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on the proposed action. FWS concurred with Reclamation's finding that the action is not likely to adversely affect any listed species. Consultation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - Fisheries has been completed with determinations of not likely to adversely affect listed species.

Existing programs to enhance and protect biological resources will continue to be implemented to ensure that no significant impacts to biological resources would occur. There will be no significant impacts to the northwestern pond turtle, waterfowl, or wetlands habitats. The water will not be used to convert existing land uses.

3. Implementation of the GCID's water sales and transfers will not interfere significantly with the foraging of native resident or migratory waterfowl. While up to 30,000 acres of rice fields will be fallowed, the action will not convert any agricultural lands to non-agricultural land uses. The only change will be a one-year increase in the time between planting of rice in the project farmlands and a minor reduction in the acreage of rice lands available to waterfowl for foraging in 2003. This reduction in foraging acreage is less-than-significant based upon the regional abundance of flooded foraging habitat.
4. Reclamation's consent to the GCID's water transfers may increase flows during July through September in the Sacramento River, however this effect will be negligible because of the relatively large volume of summer flows in the Sacramento River.
5. Reclamation's consent to the GCID's water sales and transfers will not impact wetlands.
6. Given the short (one-year) duration of the GCID's water sales and transfers, no land use conversion will result from this action. These water transfers will not provide for additional water supplies that could act as an incentive for increased acreage of agricultural production or other activities resulting in land use changes. Temporary idling or cropping changes are ongoing and routine agricultural activities in the water sale areas. Rice production for the Sacramento Valley in 2003 would be maintained within the 12-year historical range of approximately 350,000 to 516,000 acres of rice planted for this project area.
7. The GCID's water sales and transfers will not result in construction actions or activities that could disturb any cultural resources. The water sales and transfers would not cause changes in land use.
8. The GCID's water sales and transfers will not affect Indian Trust Assets.
9. Environmental Justice - The GCID's water sales and transfers will allow the continuation of agricultural production and will not result in changes to employment of minority and low-income populations. No disproportionate impacts to minority or low-income populations will occur.